



Guidelines for Writing Multiple Choice Items

- Write questions that measure understanding, insight, and higher level skills. Don't be trivial.
- 2. Use concise, straightforward language.
- Present the problem or question as clearly as possible in the stem. Don't include unnecessary information.
- 4. Don't be tricky or cute.
- 5. Strive to be interesting to students at the target grade level.
- Avoid bias toward or against any group of individuals.

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Guidelines for Writing Multiple Choice Items

- 7. When calling for a judgment or conclusion, the student must be able to infer the correct answer from the text. The stems of items that call for a judgment or a conclusion should be worded accordingly ("According to the author," or "according to the selection").
- 8. Don't pose questions such as "What do you think?" or "What would you do?" because any option might be defensible.
- Avoid using negative stems that ask the students to choose the one wrong answer, such as those that use the terms "except" and "not".

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Guidelines for Writing Multiple Choice Items

- 10. Use options that fit grammatically with the stem.
- 11. Write options that are parallel in grammatical structure, logic and length.
- 12. Use distracters that are incorrect but plausible to students at the target grade level.
- 13. Provide one and only one correct answer, or one answer that is clearly the best.
- 14. Don't use "all of these" or "none of the above" as an option. This is inconsistent with there being only one correct answer.

....





Guidelines for Writing Multiple Choice Items

- 15. Numerical options should be presented in ascending or descending order.
- 16. Unnecessary or redundant information should generally not be included in the stem and never in the options.
- 17. Items should include multicultural contexts and names (unfamiliar names should be used in short, easy items and familiar names in hard items).





Guidelines for Writing Multiple Choice Items

- 18. Complete Question stems are preferred.
 - Open-ended stems are acceptable if it is clear from the stem what the item is asking.
 - For example, "The boy in the story lived —" is an unclear stem. Where did the boy live? With whom did he live? When did he live? How did he live? Students cannot determine what the item is asking until they read all the answer choices.
 - On the other hand, "The boy liked to watch ships because he —" is acceptable. The stem clearly asks "why" he liked to watch ships.



Six Criteria for Valid Items

- 1. The CONTENT of the item matches the CONTENT of the expectation.
- 2. The PERFORMANCE required in the item matches the VERB of the expectation.
- 3. The item cannot be solved merely by TEST-WISENESS.





Six Criteria for Valid Items

- 4. The item addresses ONLY ONE content expectation (may not be required in some instances).
- 5. The item addresses important content related to the expectation.
- 6. The CONTEXT of the item is APPROPRIATE and ENGAGING.

Adapted from Theron Blakeslee,

Michigan Mathematics Leadership Academy (MMLA)





The CONTENT of the item matches the 1. The CONTENT of the item matches the CONTENT of the expectation (i.e., "Alignment")

Chemistry prerequisite HSCE:

P4.p2D Recognize that the properties of a compound differ from those of its individual elements.





The CONTENT of the item matches the CONTENT of the expectation

P4.p2D Recognize that the properties of a compound differ from those of its individual elements.

Example: Which of the following is true for chemical compounds that have been detected elsewhere in the universe?

- a. They have a greater average density than the same compounds found on Earth.
- b. They are composed of the same elements that are found on Earth. *
- c. They are less reactive chemically than the same compounds found on Earth.
- d. Those with the greatest molar masses are found furthest away from our solar system.

Question: How well-aligned is this item to the Content Expectation?





The CONTENT of the item matches the CONTENT of the expectation

P4.p2D Recognize that the properties of a compound differ from those of its individual elements.

Example: Which of the following is a property of water that differs from its individual elements?

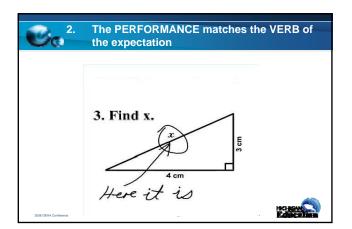
- a. Water is combustible in air
- b. Water is metallic
- c. Water is less dense
- d. Water is a liquid at room temperature*

(Getting closer...)

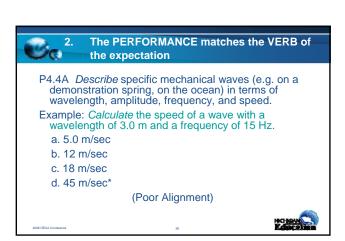


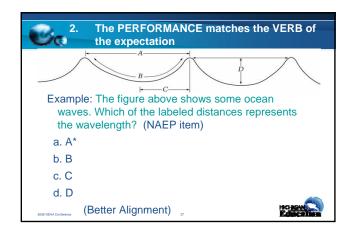
For	m of Carbon	Charcoal (C)	Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂)		
Stat	te at Room Temperature	Solid	Gas		
Soli	uble in Water	No	Yes		
Con	nbustible in Air	Yes	No		
Example: Based on the information in the table above, which is a reasonable hypothesis regarding elements and their compounds? (NAEP item)					
A.	A. An element retains its physical and chemical properties when it is combined into a compound.				
B.	B. When an element reacts to form a compound, its chemical properties are changed but its physical properties are not.				
C.	C. When an element reacts to form a compound, its physical				

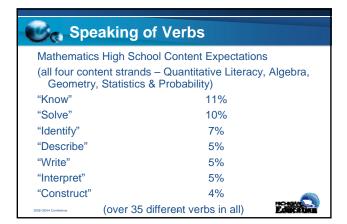
When an element reacts to form a compound, its physical properties are changed but its chemical properties are not. Both the chemical and physical properties of a compound are different from the properties of the elements of which it is composed.* (Well-aligned)

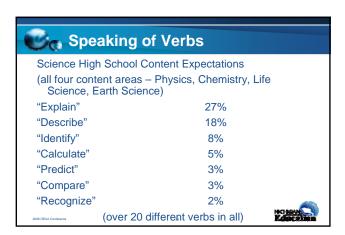


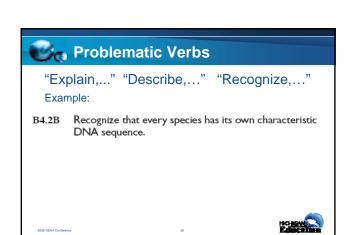
	e PERFORMANCE matches the VERB of expectation
	thue of x in the equation below? Solution to the equation shown below? $2x - 6 = x$
A 2 B 3 C 6 D 12	Note: x is a variable; its value can be any real number. In the original, there are four defensible answers.
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Problematic Verbs

"Explain,..." "Describe,..." "Recognize,..." Example:

B4.2B Recognize that every species has its own characteristic DNA sequence.

Does every species have its own characteristic DNA?

a. Yes

b. No





Problematic Verbs

"Explain,..." "Describe,..." "Recognize,..." Example:

B4.2B Recognize that every species has its own characteristic DNA sequence.

What kind of DNA does a garter snake have?

a. goldfish DNA

b. pine tree DNA

b. E. coli DNA

d. garter snake DNA





The item cannot be solved merely by **TEST-WISENESS**

An initial population of 300 people grows at 2% per year. What will the population be in 10 years?

a. 234

b. 265

c. 302

d. 366*

More examples later...

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The item cannot be solved merely by TEST-WISENESS

Example: *Nitrogen-fixing bacteria* help cycle nitrogen through ecosystems. How do they do this?

- A. They change *nitrogen* into forms usable by plants.*
- B. They convert organic compounds to inorganic compounds during decomposition.
- C. They release chemical energy during respiration.
- D. They convert sunlight into chemical energy during photosynthesis.

More examples later...

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The item addresses ONLY ONE content expectation

Example: How is our solar system similar to an atom?

- A. The force of gravity holds planets and electrons in their orbits.
- B. Nuclear fusion constantly occurs in the sun and in the atom's nucleus.
- C. Electrons and planets both travel in well-defined paths.
- D. The solar system and the atom are mostly empty space.*

What have we learned if a student misses this item?

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The item addresses ONLY ONE content expectation

Is it ...

E5.1A Describe the position and motion of our solar system in our galaxy and the overall scale, structure, and age of the universe.

or

C4.8B Describe the atom as mostly empty space with an extremely small, dense nucleus consisting of the protons and neutrons and an electron cloud surrounding the nucleus.

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ALL the content in the expectation is addressed in the item bank

B3.4d Describe the greenhouse effect and list possible causes.

Example: Which of the following is the main contributor to the earth's greenhouse effect?

- a. the earth's distance from the sun
- b. the gases in the earth's atmosphere*
- c. the tilt of the earth's axis
- d. the number of active volcanoes on earth

Will this item adequately assess the entire CE?

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ALL the content in the expectation is addressed in the item bank

B3.4d Describe the greenhouse effect and list possible causes.

Example: Which of the following facts about the earth's temperature is due mainly to the greenhouse effect?

- A. Earth's average temperature is about 30° C warmer than expected.*
- B. Earth's oceans warm and cool much more slowly than its land masses.
- C. Earth's average summer temperature is about 15° C warmer than its winter temperature.
- D. Earth's temperature at the poles is cooler than at the equator.

.....





ALL the content in the expectation is addressed in the item bank

B3.4d Describe the greenhouse effect and list possible causes.

Example: Which of the following atmospheric gases is NOT considered a "greenhouse" gas?

- a. oxygen*
- b. carbon dioxide
- c. water vapor
- d. ozone

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"What is the minimum number of items needed to adequately assess each of these High School Content Expectations?"

L4.1.1 Distinguish between inductive and deductive reasoning, identifying and providing examples of each.

G1.2.3 Know a proof of the Pythagorean Theorem and use the Pythagorean Theorem and its converse to solve multi-step problems.

A2.10.2 Use the relationship between degree and radian measures to solve problems.

108 OEAA Confen



Activity #1

"What is the minimum number of items needed to adequately assess each of these High School Content Expectations?"

C4.8A Identify the location, relative mass, and charge for electrons, protons, and neutrons.

B2.5g Compare and contrast plant and animal cells.

P4.10f Calculate the amount of work done when a charge moves through a potential difference, V.

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The CONTEXT of the item is APPROPRIATE and ENGAGING

OXON HILL, Md. -- The school system in Prince George's County is apologizing to parents after a teacher gave students a math test filled with inappropriate questions.

School administrators confirmed that a 10th-grade geometry teacher at Oxon Hill High School administered the test.

Officials said the test contained phrases like "Jose has two ounces of cocaine," "Willie gets \$200 for a stolen BMW," and "Raul gets six years for murder."

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nbc4.com September, 2004





The CONTEXT of the item is APPROPRIATE and ENGAGING

The Danish astronomer Ole Roemer (1644-1710) was the first person to determine that light traveled with a measurable speed. As Earth revolved around the sun, he noticed a variation in the time lo emerged from behind Jupiter, and calculated that light took 22 minutes to cross a diameter of Earth's orbit. If the diameter of Earth's orbit is 3.0 x 10¹¹ m, what value would Roemer have calculated for the speed of light?

- a. 4.4 x 10⁻⁹ m/sec
- b. 2.2 x 108 m/sec*
- c. 3.0 x 108 m/sec
- d. 1.3 x 10¹⁰ m/sec

(Inappropriate and confusing context)



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44



The CONTEXT of the item is APPROPRIATE and ENGAGING

Some items require a context,...

31 During football season, Ronald recorded his body weight.

Ronald's Body Weight				
1 st week	215 pounds			
2 nd week	222 pounds			
3 rd week	219 pounds			
4 th week	226 pounds			
5 th week	223 pounds			
6 th week	230 pounds			

According to the pattern, how much would Ronald weigh in the 11th week?

- A 227 pounds
- B 235 pounds
- C 238 pounds
- D 245 pounds







The CONTEXT of the item is APPROPRIATE and ENGAGING

When items are written to particular content statements, such as the history and nature of science, they may be framed in these contextual components of science content.'

Example: Ernest Rutherford found that when he fired alpha particles at a thin gold foil, some were scattered at large angles. What caused this scattering?

- a. The gold's positive atomic nuclei attracted the negatively charged alpha particles.
- b. The gold's negative atomic nuclei repelled the negatively charged alpha particles.
- c. The gold's negative atomic nuclei attracted the positively charged alpha particles.
- d. The gold's positive atomic nuclei repelled the positively charged alpha particles.*

Science Framework for the 2009 NAEP





Word economy and formatting

Instead of this formatting,

Jorge needs to evaluate the expression $\frac{-2(4-3)+8-4}{}$ in order to finish his math homework. What should his answer be?

Jorge needs to evaluate the expression below in order to finish his math homework.

$$\frac{-2(4-3)+8-4}{5}$$

What should his answer be?

Something to consider: To provide access to more students, take formulas, expressions, lists, etc. buried in text out of the text and center on a single lin







Word economy and formatting

Carol asked her 4 best friends, Alice, Clark, Ruth, and Matt, if she could measure their heights in inches. She found that Alice was 58 inches tall; Clark was 62 inches tall; Ruth was 60 inches tall; and Matt was 61 inches tall. To the nearest inch, what was the mean height of Carol's 4 friends?

What about this instead?

Carol measured the heights of each of 4 friends. Her results are shown

Alice: 58 inches Ruth: 60 inches

Clark: 62 inches Matt: 61 inches

To the nearest inch, what is the mean height of Carol's 4 friends?

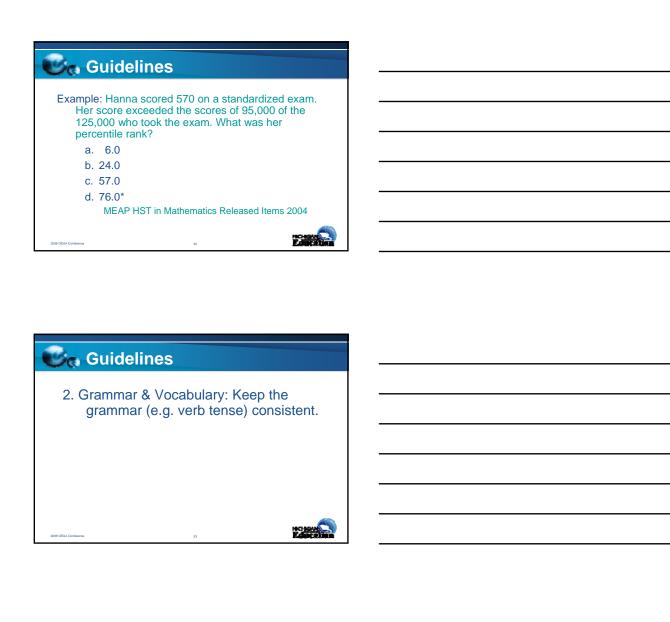
Use a chart, a bulleted list, a graphic, etc. to break up reading.



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"STEM" Item Format – Multiple Choice The Big Bang Theory states that Earth is A. moving away from the center of the universe.* spiraling in towards the center of the universe. drifting in a random path throughout the universe. D. traveling in an orbit around the center of the universe. (MEAP Released Item 2004) Editoria **Guidelines** 1. Item "stem" should be longer (a complete sentence, if possible), the "options" should be shorter. **Guidelines** Example: Hanna scored 570 on a standardized exam. Her score exceeded the scores of 95,000 of the

125,000 who took the exam. Therefore
a. her percentile rank was 6.0
b. her percentile rank was 24.0
c. her percentile rank was 57.0
d. her percentile rank was 76.0*

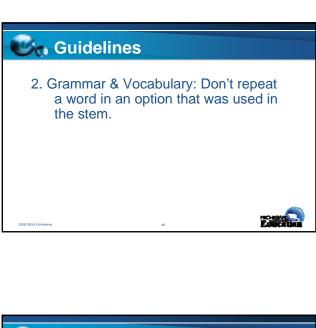


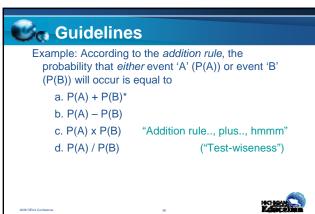


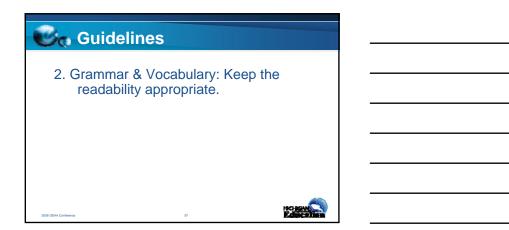
Example: A certain species of bird can be brown or white. The white color is a recessive trait, while the brown color is a dominant trait. When two brown birds mate, is it possible for them to have white offspring?

- No, because both parents will have only genes for being brown.
- Yes, because offspring color does not depend on the genes of the parents.
- Yes, because both parents may have and pass on the gene for being white.*
- No, because the parents passed on only the dominant trait to their offspring.











A1.2.9 Know common formulas (e.g. slope, distance between two points, quadratic formula, compound interest, distance = rate x time), and apply appropriately in contextual situations. (Algebra II)

Example: A credit union returns 5.5% per annum compounded quarterly on a 15-month CD. If \$10,000 is deposited and the interest is accrued, what is the balance in the account after one year?

(Any troublesome vocabulary here?)

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3. (a) Avoid the use of absolute terms, e.g. "always" or "never."

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"Always" & "Never" - Exception

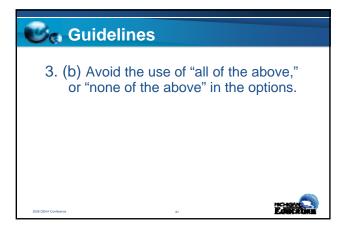
Example: The Earth's Moon is

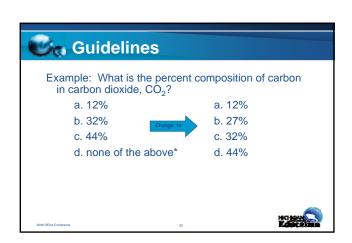
- A. always much closer to the Sun than it is to the Farth
- B. always much closer to the Earth than it is to the Sun*
- C. about the same distance from the Sun as it is from the Earth
- D. sometimes closer to the Sun than it is to the Earth and sometimes closer to the Earth than it is to the Sun

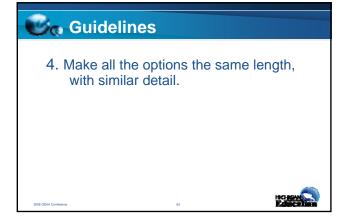
Science Framework for the 2009 NAEP



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Example: A local car dealership wants to know how many people hear their advertisements on radio. Which method provides the most valid results?

- A. Survey the next 20 customers
- B. Survey all the people living within ½ mile
- C. Survey a large random sample of people living within the listening range of the radio station*
- D. Survey customers at a nearby auto repair shop

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5. Present numerical options consistently.

- Usually in ascending, or descending order.
- Don't mix specific values with ranges, etc.

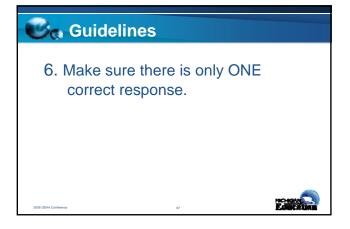
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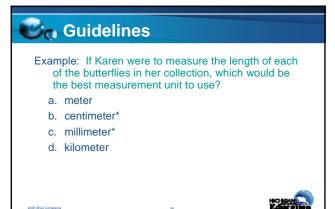
D. One half*

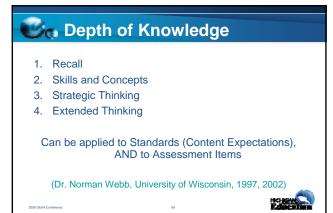


Example: In certain breeds of dogs, deafness is due to a recessive allele (d) of a particular gene, and normal hearing is due to its dominant allele (D). What is the probability that the offspring of a normal heterozygous (Dd) dog and a deaf dog (dd) will have normal hearing? A. 100% A. 0% B. 0.25 C. less than 1/3 C. 50%*

D. 100%









Depth of Knowledge

Level 1 - Recall

The recall of information (fact, definition, or term), or performing a simple procedure (a "recipe"), or applying a simple algorithm or formula. Requires only a rote response, a well-known formula, or following a well-defined procedure that typically involves only one step. Key words include "identify," "recognize," "use," "calculate" and "measure."

A student answering a Level 1 item either knows the answer or does not. The answer does not need to be "solved" or "figured out."

(Verbs like "describe" and "explain" can be used at different levels depending on the complexity of what being "described" or "explained.")





Depth of Knowledge

B2.1A Explain how cells transform energy (ultimately obtained from the sun) from one form to another through the processes of photosynthesis and respiration. Identify the reactants and products in the general reaction of photosynthesis.

Level 1 Example: Which of the following is a product of the overall process of photosynthesis?

- a. Carbon dioxide
- b. Protein
- c. Glucose*
- d. Water





Depth of Knowledge

E4.p2A Describe the composition and layers of the atmosphere. (prerequisite)

Level 1 Example: Air is made up of many gases. Which gas is found in the greatest amount?

- a. Nitrogen*
- b. Oxygen
- c. Carbon Dioxide
- d. Hydrogen

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This level is **more complex** and involves mental processing beyond simply recalling or reproducing a response. Items require students to make some decisions and typically involve **more than one step.** Key words and activities include "**classifying**," "**organizing**," "**estimating**," or "**interpreting or comparing data**" in tables graphs or charts.

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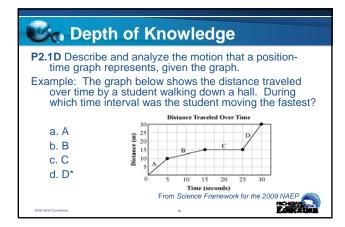
Level 2 Examples include:

- Explain the relationship between facts or variables;
- Describe examples and non-examples of science concepts;
- Select a procedure and perform it;
- Formulate a routine problem given data & conditions; and
- Organize, represent and interpret data.

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© Depth o	of Knowledge
latitude marked. Which	60 N 30 N Equator 30 S 60 S so a map of the world with the lines of of the following places marked on the map is verage yearly temperature similar to location ??
A. A. B. B. C. C. D. D. D.	From Science Framework for the 2009 NAEP





Depth of Knowledge

Level 3 - Strategic Thinking

This level is more demanding and requires planning, using evidence, and complex and abstract reasoning. In most instances, requiring students to explain their thinking is Level 3. Students are asked to draw conclusions, cite evidence, develop logical arguments, solve complex problems, explain concepts and justify their response.





Depth of Knowledge

Examples include:

- Identify research questions and design investigations;
- Solve complex, non-routine problems;
- Develop a scientific model; and
- Form conclusions from experimental data.





Level 3 Example: The main reason for Earth's temperature being hotter in summer than in winter is:

- The earth's distance from the sun changes.
- B. The sun is higher in the sky.*
- The distance between the northern hemisphere and the sun changes.
- D. Ocean currents carry warm water north.

From Science Framework for the 2009 NAEP





Depth of Knowledge

B4.2B Recognize that every species has its own characteristic DNA sequence.

Level 3 Example: Two sparrows are in the same species, but live in different areas in Michigan. How does their DNA compare?

- Their DNA is identical because all birds have the same DNA
- Their DNA is very different because they have different sources of food
- Their DNA is very similar because they are members of the same species*
- Their DNA is very different because they live in different habitats





Depth of Knowledge

Level 4 – Extended Thinking

This level requires complex reasoning, experimental design, and planning usually over extended periods of time. Students are asked to make connections within or among content areas. Level 4 tasks are typically assessed locally and often involve performance or open-ended assessments. Many on-demand instruments will not include any items at Level 4.



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Examples:

- Based on provided data from a complex experiment that is novel to the student, deduce the fundamental relationship between several controlled variables
- Conduct an investigation, from specifying a problem to designing and carrying out an experiment, to analyzing its data and forming conclusions.

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Activity #2

Determine the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Level most appropriate for each of these Science High School Content Expectations

L4.2.2 Use the connectives "NOT," "AND," "OR," and "IF...,THEN," in mathematical and everyday settings. Know the truth table of each connective and how to logically negate statements involving these connectives.

A2.1.1 Recognize whether a relationship (given in contextual, symbolic, tabular, or graphical form) is a function; and identify its domain and range.

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Activity #2

Determine the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Level most appropriate for each of these Science High School Content Expectations

G1.8.2 Identify symmetries of pyramids, prisms, cones, cylinders, hemispheres, and spheres.

B2.5i Relate cell parts/organelles to their function.

C5.2e Identify the limiting reagent when given the masses of more than one reactant.

P4.5C Provide evidence to support the claim that sound is energy transferred by a wave, not energy transferred by particles.

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"But, if teachers clarify the intended outcomes of their course and agree on how students are to be tested, won't they <u>teach to the test?</u>"

"The correct response is, of course, 'That's the idea!'

Teaching to the test is a perfectly appropriate
and honorable thing to do, particularly when the
test represents a <u>valid</u> assessment of the
students' acquisition of meaningful knowledge and
skills."

- R. DuFour, R. Eaker, 1998

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